



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Chief Academic Officer

Summer 2010

# English Language Arts Summer Learning Packet Grades 3-5

**English Language Arts  
Grades 3-5  
*Suggested activities for students***

**Note to Parents**

These take-home activities are designed to support reading over the summer. The most important thing you can do to help your children become better students is to read aloud to them and encourage them to read on their own. In addition to the *Make a Splash* book list that the DC Public Library has available at all branches and online at <http://www.dclibrary.org/summerreading>, we encourage you and your child to find other reading material that is of interest in order to foster a love of reading. Throughout this packet, you will find guidance on choosing a “just right” book for your students and supplemental activities that your children can complete after reading books. Enjoy!

### Five Finger Rule

Sometimes it is difficult for children to decide if a book is too easy or too hard. Here is a test to help them decide. Help them follow these simple steps:

- 1) Choose a book.
- 2) Read the title, author, and back blurb. Ask yourself, **“Am I interested?”**
- 3) Read one page using the Five-Finger Rule:
  - Choose a page near the middle of the book to read.
  - Read the page.
  - Put up one finger every time you come to a word you do not know.
  - When you get to the end of the page, count how many fingers you have up.
    - 0 or 1 finger:** Easy
    - 2 or 3 fingers:** Just right!
    - 4 or 5 fingers:** Too hard. Read this with an adult or choose a different book today.
- 4) Ask yourself, **“Did I understand what I read?”**
  - If you answered, **“No,”** to any of these questions, try again!
  - If you answered, **“Yes,”** you have found a Just-Right book!



### Tips for Reading Aloud

Children are never too old to have an adult read aloud to them! Here are some tips to keep in mind when reading aloud to your child.

#### Before you begin to read:

- Point out the book's title, author, and illustrator
- Look at the cover and ask your child, "What do you think this book will be about?"
- Take a *picture walk*. Without reading any of the words, look through the pictures in the book and describe what you see. For chapter books, read the blurb on the back of the book and skim the chapter titles.

#### While Reading:

- Use expression!
- For younger students, point to the words as you read.
- Stop to ask questions:
  - "What do you think will happen next?"
  - "How do you think [name of character] feels?"
  - "What does this part remind you of?"
- Stop to notice features in words, if appropriate (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, words with multiple meanings, etc.).
- Stop to notice sight words (see Sight Word List on page 4).

#### After Reading:

- Talk about the character and setting. Compare these to characters and setting in other stories
- Identify the moral of the story.
- Talk about the main problem in the story. How did characters work to solve their problems?
- Discuss the traits of the characters and how they influenced the outcome of the story.
- Identify the theme or main idea of the story.
- Make personal connections with the book (e.g., "What did the story remind you of?")
- Retell the story (first/next/last or beginning/middle/end).
- "What do you think could happen next?"
- Act out the story with your child.
- Change one element of the story to make a new story. For example, change the pumpkin carriage in *Cinderella* to a sports car. How does the story change?
- Record yourself reading one of your child's favorite books.

### Sight Words

Sight words are commonly used words that cannot be sounded out easily. Below you'll find a list of common sight words for grade 3 and a list of common nouns that older students should recognize. You can practice these words with your child using the following activities:

- Find these words in books that you read together
- Write the words on a piece of paper and have your child trace the letters while saying each letter's name
- Play Scrabble and encourage your child to create some of these sight words.
- Have your child draw a picture and/or write a sentence that goes along with each word.
- Play Concentration: Sight word concentration cards can easily be made using index cards. Write each word on two cards, shuffle, and place face down to play. Each player can turn over two cards per turn. If the cards match, the player gets to keep them. The player with the most matches by the end of the game wins.
- Print out flashcards and activities for each word list:  
<http://www.k12reader.com/dolch-word-list/>

**3rd Grade Sight Words:** about, better, bring, carry, clean, cut, done, draw, drink, eight, fall, far, full, got, grow, hold, hot, hurt, if, keep, kind, laugh, light, long, much, myself, never, only, own, pick, seven, shall, show, six, small, start, ten, today, together, try, warm

**List of Common Nouns:** apple, baby, back, ball, bear, bed, bell, bird, birthday, boat, box, boy, bread, brother, cake, car, cat, chair, chicken, children, Christmas, coat, corn, cow, day, dog, doll, door, duck, egg, eye, farm, farmer, father, feet, fire, fish, floor, flower, game, garden, girl, good-bye, grass, ground, hand, head, hill, home, horse, house, kitty, leg, letter, man, men, milk, money, morning, mother, name, nest, night, paper, party, picture, pig, rabbit, rain, ring, robin, Santa Claus, school, seed, sheep, shoe, sister, snow, song, squirrel, stick, street, sun, table, thing, time, top, toy, tree, watch, water, way, wind, window, wood

### Oral Activities

Children need to be able to talk about the books they read in order to show that they understand the stories. The following activities can develop these skills:

- Ask your child to talk about an experience that he or she had during the day using the words *first, next, last*. Encourage him or her to use detail and recount the activities in correct order.
- After reading a story, ask your child to tell you what happened in the story using the words *first, next and last* or *beginning, middle and end*.
- Make predictions with your child about what could happen next in a story or in real life.
- Encourage your child to ask questions about a book or real life experiences. Incorporate question words such as *who, what, where, when, why* and *how*.
- Compare characters in different stories.
- Make connections with a story. Ask your child if a story reminded him or her of anything in his or her own life or of another story that he or she has read.
- Talk about the problem and solution in stories and in real life.

### Written Activities

The next few pages contain graphic organizers that your child can use while writing this summer. Graphic organizers are used to put ideas in order before writing. Suggested writing prompts have been included on the top of each page. Work with your child to find a writing activity that is interesting for him or her! Encourage your child to share his or her stories with you.

Use this graphic organizer to put ideas in order. After reading a story, draw a picture of what happened first, next, and last and then write a few sentences about it. You can also use this organizer to write about real life experiences such as a trip to the grocery store or something that happened at the park.

<b>Beginning</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Middle</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>End</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Use this graphic organizer to write a friendly letter. Friendly letters can be written to a friend or relative recommending (or not recommending) a book you've read, to the author of a book, or to a teacher or classmate about what you are doing over the summer. You can also use this format to write a thank-you note or invitation.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

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Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

You can use this graphic organizer to research an issue that you are curious about or to defend something that you believe. Using your research, create a list of arguments for and against your issue. Brainstorm as many arguments as possible. Remember: you are trying to convince the reader!

My position is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g., *I think teachers should not assign homework.*)

Arguments that Support Your Position	Arguments that Oppose Your Position
1. _____ _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ _____ _____
2. _____ _____ _____ _____	2. _____ _____ _____ _____
3. _____ _____ _____ _____	3. _____ _____ _____ _____

Use this organizer to write a story or do research. Write the main idea in the center box. Write a supporting detail in the first three boxes and a concluding sentence in the final box. You can also add more details in each square. After completing the graphic organizer, transfer your ideas to a sheet of lined paper. This page contains an example. You can find a blank graphic organizer on page 12.

<p>It's easy to cook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-put in pot</li><li>-pour pasta sauce</li><li>-top with cheese</li></ul>	<p>It's fun to eat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-twirl on fork</li><li>-slurp it</li><li>-splatter the sauce</li></ul>
<p>It's delicious.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-tomatoes</li><li>-Italian spices</li><li>-cheese</li></ul>	<p>My favorite meal is spaghetti and meatballs because it's easy to cook, fun to eat, and delicious.</p>

My favorite meal is spaghetti.

[Supporting Detail]	[Supporting Detail]
[Supporting Detail]	[Concluding Sentence]

[Main Idea]

Use this graphic organizer to take notes on a book and remember important details from the text. Draw a picture of important facts in the box, and use the lines to write about your picture.

Title of Book or Topic \_\_\_\_\_



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Use this paper to draw a picture and write a few sentences about a topic that you and an adult decide on together.

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